

Poets often spend much time contemplating and brainstorming different forms for their poem's theme, content, and message.

The Red Wheelbarrow

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens

What depends?

Why isn't there any punctuation?

The long and short lines look choppy!

Nothing could possibly be as simple as this.
Could it?

-- William Carlos Williams

1. Every reader, even the most skilled, has some level of confusion when first encountering a poem. However, the ability to read and comprehend poetry rests on your capacity to ask yourself the right questions about the poem. The key to understanding this poem is to explore the question, "what depends?" Literally? Figuratively speaking?

2. The four units of the poem look somewhat alike. There is not any punctuation either. What was the poet's intention by using no punctuation?

3. Write a parody of the red wheelbarrow below. It must follow the form and style of William Carlos Williams' *The Red Wheelbarrow*.

Buffalo Bill 's
by E. E. Cummings

Buffalo Bill 's
defunct
who used to
ride a watersmooth-silver
stallion
and break onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat
Jesus
he was a handsome man
and what i want to know is
how do you like your blueeyed boy
Mister Death

1. Form and style: Why might E.E. Cummings chose not to use spaces between "onetwothreefourfive pigeonsjustlikethat"?
2. What do we know about Buffalo Bill, the character in the poem, from the first eight lines in the poem? What bare bones description does Cummings give us to develop his character in those lines? Explain?
3. What happened to Buffalo Bill? What is the poem's theme? Support your answer.

"Out, Out—"

by Robert Frost

The buzz-saw snarled and rattled in the yard
And made dust and dropped stove-length sticks of wood,
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.
And from there those that lifted eyes could count
Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont.
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.
And nothing happened: day was all but done.
Call it a day, I wish they might have said
To please the boy by giving him the half hour
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.
His sister stood beside them in her apron
To tell them "Supper." At the word, the saw,
As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,
Leaped out at the boy's hand, or seemed to leap—
He must have given the hand. However it was,
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!
The boy's first outcry was a rueful laugh,
As he swung toward them holding up the hand
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all—
Since he was old enough to know, big boy
Doing a man's work, though a child at heart—
He saw all spoiled. "Don't let him cut my hand off—
The doctor, when he comes. Don't let him, sister!"
So. But the hand was gone already.
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.
And then—the watcher at his pulse took fright.
No one believed. They listened at his heart.
Little—less—nothing!—and that ended it.
No more to build on there. And they, since they
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

Reflection Question:

Compare "Out,--Out", "We Real Cool" and "Buffalo Bill;s" theme? Are the themes of each poem similar? How or how not? Use quotes from each story in your response.